

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT THE HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2020/21-2024/25

1.0 Development of the Higher Education Strategic Plan

The education sector in Uganda has rapidly changed and grown as a response to the high demand for education across levels. The rapid growth and demand for higher education in Uganda is largely attributed to the country's high population growth rate, inclusive education schemes such as universal primary education & universal secondary education, liberalization of higher education sub-sector, and a predominately young school going population.

Whereas enrolments have tremendously increased across levels, there has not been proportional growth in infrastructure, educational facilities, staffing needs, funding levels, students scholarships for all qualifying applicants, doctoral production etc. There is therefore need to diversify higher education provisioning by embracing distance education as one of the alternative responses to space and staff inadequacies.

Universities and other tertiary institutions also need to develop robust frameworks for enrolment planning to avoid space stress, over or under subscriptions and duplication of academic programs which is one of the major wastes in higher education sub-sectors. Despite the private universities being more in numbers than public universities, enrolments in private higher education institutions are still relatively low due to the few academic programs and chilly picking tendencies. Public universities in Uganda are hence over subscribed in terms of enrolments amidst many quality assurance hurdles.

The ability of the high education sub-sector to absorb the increased demand for higher education without substantial and sustainable investments in infrastructure, educational facilities, staff development schemes, salary enhancements, a national credit accumulation & transfer system, a national internship program, scholarships for qualifying applicants, integration of ICTs etc has implications on access, equity, gender and provisioning of quality

higher education. In addition, globalization and internationalization have spread the concerns for quality and relevance of higher education courses of study beyond national borders. Mobility & employability of high education graduates are among the top priorities for higher education reforms & improvement across economic blocks and common higher education areas.

Uganda like many Sub-Saharan African countries is grappling with the problems of youth and graduate unemployment compounded with the issue of youth-graduate unemployment. The low labour market transition rates of higher education graduates makes unemployment a real life time experience for higher education graduates. The problem of youth-graduate unemployment in Uganda is further complicated by the lack of or inadequacy of employable skills among the uneducated or semi-educated youth and the perceived mismatch of skills imparted to higher education graduates and those required by prospective employers. It is hence important to underpin the on-going debate on the relevance of the current higher education academic programs to the labour market demands in Uganda.

Uganda needs engineering and non-engineering skills to attain and avoid middle income status traps. Sufficient professionals in various occupational categories are therefore required to: improve service delivery, produce new products and innovate new efficient ways of producing existing products. The higher education sub-sector needs to improve equity in access and quality of outcomes to keep pace with the labour-market requirements of the economy. The bias towards university education at the expense of lower levels of the other tertiary sub-sectors must be addressed to increase the number of artisans, technicians and technologists to be responsive to the changing labour-market skill imbalances & shortages and the diverse student body.

It has, however, been argued that other than the perceived lack of and or skills mismatch of high education graduates and prospective employers skill requirements, the size of the economy could be a major factor in the youth-graduate unemployment paradox in Uganda. There are few beginners' jobs or employment opportunities in the economy for fresh

graduates to launch their career paths yet the number of graduates produced by higher education institutions increases every year. The extent to which tertiary institutions prepare their graduates for the labour market is, however, an area for further investigation.

In an attempt to address the above higher education quality assurance aspects, the Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2003-2015 was developed in 2004 to guide the development of the higher education sub-sector in Uganda. The HESP 2003-2015 aimed at ensuring equitable accessibility and provision of quality & relevant higher education to all qualifying applicants.

The HESP 2003-2015 has since expired. In the process of developing the new HESP 2020/21-2024/25, it is prudent to ascertain the extent to which the expired HESP 2003-2015 was implemented and document the lessons learnt. The lesson learnt during the implementation of the expired HESP should practically inform the development of the new HESP 2020/21-2024/25.

The new HESP 2020/21-2024/25 is expected to provide a vision to transform the higher education sub-sector in Uganda. Higher education in Uganda seems to be at a point of transition: the number of qualifying applicants is growing every year; graduate unemployment is on the rise, high-order knowledge-based skills are required in the labour market due changing lifestyles of the middle class, moving from a social elite confine towards mass participation etc. These changes also pose additional challenges to staff, and in some cases the physical infrastructure is under pressure. The new HESP 2020/21-2024/25 must therefore be explicit on how the current challenges facing higher education in Uganda will be addressed to meaningfully improve the quality of provisioning the tripartite aspects of higher education.

2.0 Goal/Purpose of the Higher Education Strategic Plan

- a) The purpose HESP 2020/21-2024/25 is to inform public policy on higher education and the strategic plans for all higher education institutions and agencies in Uganda.

- b) The HESP 2020/21-2024/25 aims at producing knowledgeable and skilled higher education graduates that meet the current and future requirements of Uganda's economy but also globally competitive.
- c) The new HESP 2020/21-2024/25 builds on the achievements of the expired HESP 2003-2015 and hence seeks to:
 - i. Clearly articulate the vision, mission and corporate values of the Ministry of Education and Sports
 - ii. Present strategic objectives and activities that will address priority areas for the transformation of the higher education sub-sector and facilitation for the period 2020/25-2024/25
 - iii. Provide a systematic platform for the formulation of rolling annual work plans and budgets and
 - iv. Provide a framework for monitoring and evaluating performance and rendering accountability to stakeholders.

2.1 Objectives

The HESP 2020/21-2024/25 is guided by the Uganda Vision 2040 of “transforming Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years” and the NDPII which among others aims at enhancing human capital development. The consulting firm or joint venture hired to develop the HESP 2020/21-2024/25 will address the following objectives:

- a) Determine the extent to which the previous HESP 2003-2015 was implemented, identify gaps & lessons learnt for the design and effective implementation for the new HESP 2020/21-2024/25
- b) Develop a new HESP 2020/21-2024/25.
- c) Determine the resource mobilization model and estimate the financial requirements for successful implementation of the new HESP 2020/21-2024/25.

- d) Assess the level of readiness for e-learning and evaluate the extent to which use of ICTs impacts on access, cost of delivery and quality of the tripartite aspects of higher education in Uganda.
- e) Establish the extent of the match or mismatch of the key labour skills that employers seek for when recruiting higher education graduates and their comparability across occupational areas and disciplines taking into consideration of academic programs deemed to be critical for national development and those deemed not.
- f) Assess the appropriateness and functionality of the higher education legal and regulatory framework for Uganda.

3.0 Scope of Assignment

The main output of the consulting firm or joint venture is the new costed HESP 2020/21-2024/25. The consultant will support the Ministry of Education and Sports and AfDB team to:

- a) Develop a new HESP 2020/21-2024/25. The new HESP will be validated through a number of stakeholders' dissemination workshops.
- b) Determine the extent to which the expired Higher Education Strategic Plan, 2003-2015 was implemented, identify gaps and document lessons learnt to inform the development of the new HESP 2020/21-2024/25 taking into consideration the rapidly changing higher education landscape.
- c) Design a Higher Education Cost Model that will be used during the simulation exercise and justify the choice between either a generic or country-specific model and the approach choice between a demographic or financial model in order to determine the level of expenditure required for the successful implementation of the HESP 2020/21-2024/25. Generate a Simulation Model.
- d) Assess the level of readiness for e-learning and evaluate the extent to which use of ICTs impacts on access, cost of delivery and quality of the tripartite aspects of higher education in Uganda. Produce ICT Readiness Report. Produce E-Learning Readiness Report

- e) Establish the extent of the match or mismatch of the key labour skills that employers seek for when recruiting higher education graduates and their comparability across occupational areas and disciplines taking into consideration of academic programs deemed to be critical for national development and those deemed not. Produce an Employers Expectations Survey Report
- f) Align the HESP 2020/21-2024/25 with the National Human Resource Development Planning Framework for Uganda, 2017.
- g) Review & suggest interventions for improvement and alignment of existing loan and scholarship schemes with the human resource needs of Uganda.
- h) Review and or update higher education training unit costs for courses of study based on the wide discipline divide and hence provide feasible rates to be adopted by Government of Uganda loan and scholarship schemes. The realistic unit costs of courses of study will provide and act as basis for adoption or adjustment of Government of Uganda loan and scholarship rates which are instrumental to quality higher education provisioning.

4.0 Description of Activities

The overall aim of any country's higher education policy is to establish globally competitive and efficient higher education institutions that are a precursor for global competitiveness and national economic development.

- a) In the process of developing the new HESP 2020/21-2024/25, the consulting firm or joint venture is expected to demonstrate clear understanding of how the expired HESP 2003-2015 will inform and shape the process of developing the new HESP 2020/21-2024/25. The consulting firm or joint venture will document the extent to which the previous HESP was implemented, identify gaps and how the lessons learnt during the implementation of the previous HESP could be used to ensure successful implementation of the new HESP 2020/21-2024/25.
- b) The funding landscape of the universities and other tertiary institutions in Uganda is now a shared responsibility of the government, parents/students and the donor

community who are not only interested in the “excellence and prestige” legacies of higher education institutions but also their efficient utilization of resources. There is need to analyze the current funding levels and funding models to the higher education sub-sector in Uganda highlighting their adequacy and or inadequacy. An implementable cost and revenue model to the higher education sector clearly spelling out roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders should be suggested based on empirical evidence and benchmarked against relevant international comparators and higher education systems, processes and outcomes in other countries.

- c) The consulting firm should assess the preparedness of higher education institutions to effectively integrate ICTs in the tripartite aspects of higher education in Uganda. Evaluate the extent to which the use of ICTs impacts on access, cost and quality of higher education in Uganda. Establish the minimum requirements [including ICT and related infrastructure, ICT governance structures, change mechanisms, information management systems, policies, legal and regulatory framework, etc] that tertiary institutions/universities require for more effective integration of ICT into the tripartite aspects of higher education.
- d) It is asserted that the tertiary education sub-sector in Uganda as result of state underfunding and the poor performance of alternative sources of funding is in crisis in attaining quality and producing well-trained graduates. It is perceived that tertiary institution graduates in Uganda do not easily find jobs because there could be a mismatch of skills held by prospective employees and those required by prospective employers of tertiary institution graduates. There is need to determine the extent to which higher education institutions prepare their graduates for the labour market. It is also necessary to investigate whether there are differences in unemployment levels based on either disciplines of study deemed to be critical to national development and those deemed not or the wider discipline divide, mode of ownership of institutions, regions of the country and gender aspects or other discriminatory avenues.

5.0 Expected Outputs

The expected final output of the consultancy is a costed HESP, 2020/21-2024/25. The HESP roadmap major outputs will be the Inception Report, Intermediate Reports, Draft Report and Stakeholders Consultations Report.

6.0 Expertise requirements for HESP Review Team Leader

- a) Lead researcher of the consultancy team/Joint Venture must have a doctorate and good understanding of higher education governance, higher education quality assurance, accreditation & regulation, financing and policy environment in Africa.
- b) Extensive experience in higher education or related sector strategic plan development and or review and published in the area of higher education in the last five years
- c) In case the consulting firm/joint venture is not based in Uganda it must have a local representative. The consulting firm or joint venture is at liberty to mobilize other experts beyond those suggested in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Other Key Experts

	Key Experts	Minimum Qualifications
1	Higher Education Specialist	PhD/Doctorate holder from a recognized University/institution.
2	Higher Education Planner	Minimum of a Master's degree in Economics or related discipline
3	E-learning or Education Technologist or E-Readiness Expert	PhD/Doctorate in ICT/Computer Science/ICT4D
4	Higher Education Quality Assurance Specialist	PhD/Doctorate in a relevant discipline BUT higher education quality assurance expert at a higher education institution or a higher education regulatory agency
5	Statistician or Mathematician	Minimum of a Master's degree in statistics or Mathematics or any other quantitative discipline.
6	Equity Specialist	Minimum of a Master's Degrees with specialisms in gender studies or related special needs disciplines from a recognized institution.
7	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Specialist	Minimum of Master's degree in Monitoring and Evaluation and or membership to a professional body in monitoring and evaluation.
8	Labour Market Specialist	Minimum of a relevant master's degree from a recognized higher education institution.
9	Institutional Development Specialist	PhD/Doctorate from a recognized training institution.

7.0 Context for HESP 2020/21-2024/25

- a) National Development Plan [NDP III] 2020/21-2024/25
- b) National Human Resource Development Planning Framework for Uganda, 2017
- c) Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan 2020/2021-2025
- d) Sector Development Planning Guidelines, June 2015
- e) Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001 and its Amendments
- f) HESP 2003-2015
- g) The White Paper on Higher Education 2020
- h) The Visitation Committee Report on Makerere University 2016 and earlier visitation reports: McGregor Visitation Committee Report to Public Universities, 2006-08, Omaswa Task Force, 2013-2014, Kabasa Committee 2013-2016 etc
- i) Departmental and other Education Agency Strategic Plans, Ministry of Education and Sports
- j) 2008 E-Readiness Survey for East African Universities [Moeli & Waema, 2009]

- and other more recent ones or specific to Uganda
- k) Financing Higher Education in Africa [World Bank, 2010] and more recent publications specific to Uganda.

8.0 Major Deliverables

Table 2: Deliverables for the HESP 2020/21-2024/25

	Title of Report	Frequency	No of Copies	Date of Submission
1	Inception Report preceded with a scoping meeting	Once	15 hard copies and one soft copy on CD ROM	30 days after signing of the contract
2	Intermediate Reports a) Employers Expectations Survey Report b) Reviewed Unit Cost Report c) Loans and Scholarship Review Report d) E-Readiness Report e) Higher Education Legal Framework Review Report	once	15 hard copies and one soft copy on CD ROM	One month before submission of the Draft HESP 2020/21-2024/25 Report
3	Draft Report of the of HESP 2020/21-2024/25	Once	15 hard copies and one soft copy on CD ROM	Five Months after submitting the Inception Report.
4	Stakeholders' Consultation Report	Once	15 hard copies	Two Weeks after holding the Stakeholders Workshop
5	Final Report of the HESP 2020/21-2024/25	Once	A Camera Ready Copy/ Soft Copy on CD ROM	Within four weeks after the Stakeholders' Workshop
6	Functional and User Friendly Simulation Model ¹	Once		Together with the final HESP 2020/21-2024/25

9.0 Quality Assurance Team

The Quality Assurance Team for the HESP 2020/21-2024/25 will include the following:

- a) Director, Higher Education and Training, Ministry of Education and Sports
- b) Commissioner, Higher Education and Training
- c) Commissioner, Education Planning and Policy Analysis
- d) Representative of the National Planning Authority
- e) Representative of the National Council for Higher Education,

¹ The Consultant/Joint Venture is required to train users before exit.

- f) Representatives from both public and private universities
- g) Representative of other tertiary institutions and

10.0 Clients input and Counterpart Personnel

The Client will be responsible for the following:

- a) Facilitate the acquisition of relevant reports and documentation (including the contract documents) pertaining to and as required in the assignment;
- b) Facilitate the contacts as well as access to information essential to the proper implementation of the assignment;
- c) Provision of a formal contact point (Quality Assurance Officer (QAO)) between the Client and the Consultant. The QAO is the Commissioner- Higher Education and who will handle all logistical related issues and coordination matters relating to the assignment. These include arranging for the issuance of letters of introduction, among others.
- d) In case of foreign consultants requiring work permits, the Ministry of Education and Sports will facilitate this process by introducing such consultants to the relevant government authorities.

11.0 Guidelines

- 11.1 The developed HESP 2020/21-2024/25 should be linked to the relevant chapter of the Education and Sports Strategic Plan 2020-2025.
- 11.2 Strictly follow the prescribed format contained in the Sector Development Planning Guidelines, June 2015 issued by the National Planning Authority. The consultant should demonstrate compliance to the prescribed format at the inception report level.
- 11.3 Take into account of implementable recommendations of The White Paper on Higher Education, Report of the Visitation Committee on Makerere University, 2017 and or earlier visitation committee reports on public universities regarding what should be addressed by the HESP 2020/21-2024/25.

- 11.4 Clearly document the process followed to develop the HESP 2020/21-2024/25 and suggest the process to be followed to conduct a mid-term review or development of future higher education strategic plans in Uganda.
- 11.5 Methodologies used or adopted to address different aspects of the assignment should be validated or be validatable.
- 11.6 Organize dissemination workshops for the selected key higher education stakeholders to discuss and share the draft plan to further inform the developed strategic plan. The Ministry of Education and Sports will meet the costs for the dissemination workshops.
- 11.7 The consulting firm or joint venture is at liberty to make suggestions for the improvements of the terms of reference to be agreed upon at the inception report level.
- 11.8 Produce a ‘Camera Ready’ copy of HESP 2020/21-2024/25 for printing. The Ministry of Education and Sports will meet the costs of printing.
- 11.9 Any other **non-cost** guidelines agreed upon or issued by the Ministry of Education and Sports during the process of developing the HESP 2020/21-2024/25 will be binding.

12.0 Reporting Arrangements

The assignment is managed by the Commissioner- Higher Education and Training under the overall supervision of the Directorate of Higher, Technical & Vocational Education and Training.

To be submitted to:

**The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education and Sports,
Plot 9/11, King George VI Way, Embassy House, 3rd Floor, Room 3.7,
P.O. Box 7063,
Kampala, Uganda.**